

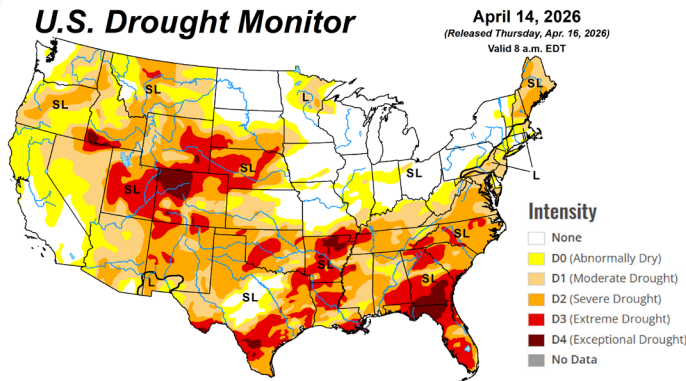
U.S. Wildfire Outlook – Spring to Early Summer 2026

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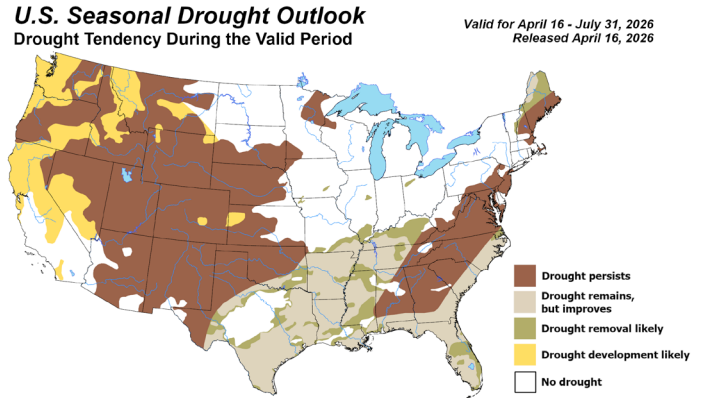
Long-term drought, below-normal snowpack, and rapid snowmelt are driving early fuel drying, increasing the likelihood of an earlier onset of the fire season.

Dry Start to 2026

- More than 40% of the U.S. is currently experiencing drought conditions.
- The Four Corners region has been unusually dry and warm this winter, with record low snowpack and persistent drought increasing the risk of early fuel drying.
- Colorado, along with parts of Texas, Georgia and Florida are facing extreme to exceptional drought conditions.
- Snow drought intensified from February into early March as record warmth accelerated snow loss.



National Drought Mitigation Center - [Droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



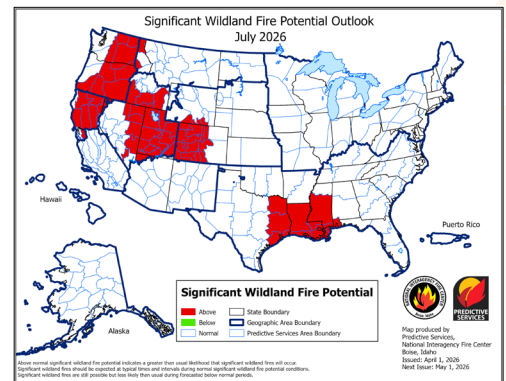
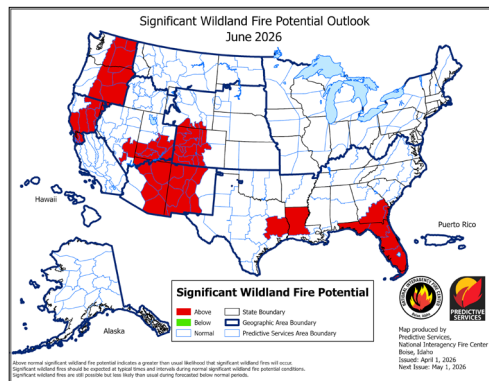
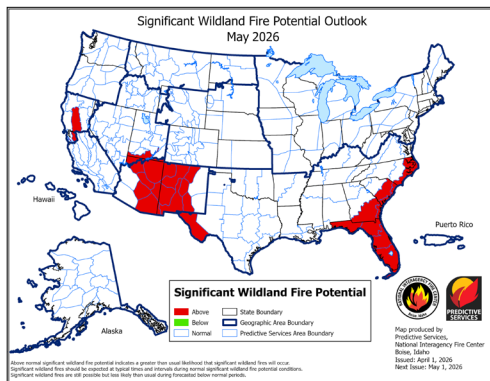
NOAA - <https://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>

El Niño Conditions are Expected to Develop Over Summer

- In the Northwest, the shift away from La Niña is expected to support drying, earlier fuel availability, and a faster rise in fire activity by June/July.
- In Northern California, the shift toward El Niño could bring moisture farther north, but more active storm patterns may also increase the risk of wildfire ignitions from lightning.

Fire Potential Outlook

- **Spring:** Above-normal fire potential remains elevated across the southern U.S., especially the Southeast and Southwest, as dry conditions and earlier fuel availability continue to support early-season activity.
- **Early Summer:** Fire potential broadens across the interior West, while parts of the southern coastal plain also remain vulnerable.
- **Mid-Summer:** As monsoon moisture improves conditions in the Southwest, elevated fire potential shifts north and west across the West, with increasing concern in the lower Mississippi Valley.



National Interagency Coordination Center, [National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook](https://www.nifc.gov/national-wildland-fire-potential-outlook)



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